

military. There is no cut in funds being affected here. The Skelton amendment will permit the administration to have more authority to use money to send in troops or peacekeepers after October 1. This is June 10. Vote against the Skelton amendment.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFazio).

Mr. DEFazio. Mr. Chairman, the Skelton amendment would allow a legitimate and proportionate role in peacekeeping, 7,000 troops. Earlier the gentleman from Indiana questioned whether that would stretch our forces too thin, whether they were overextended.

I do not believe the short-term commitment of 7,000 peacekeepers is an overextension. But the thoughtless, nonstrategic, nontactical permanent garrison of 100,000 troops in Europe is expensive and does overtax our military resources.

Ask a military strategist, why a permanent garrison of 100,000 troops in Europe? They say, well, to show commitment to Europe. I think we have shown commitment. Commitment to what, I might ask? To subsidizing and offsetting the legitimate defense obligations of our allies in Europe?

For years we were poised to repel an attack through the Fulda Gap. The only invasion going on in Eastern Europe into the former Soviet bloc involving the Gap is an invasion by a U.S.-based clothing store into that area. There is no threat from the Soviet bloc any longer. We no longer need to permanently garrison 100,000 troops in Europe.

Support the later vote on the Shays-Frank amendment to phase down our obligation to 25,000 troops, and help our military to husband its resources so they can serve their core obligations to defend our Nation against real threats.

That would be a vote here. If Members are really concerned about the military being stretched too thin, vote to stop that permanent, thoughtless, anachronistic deployment of 100,000 troops.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Chairman, a peace has been negotiated in Kosovo, and are we not relieved? And are we not proud of our troops, and are we not proud that we did not do this in a unilateral effort, it was a multilateral effort?

But at the same time, we must not overlook the United States' share of the burden to reach this agreement. In this effort, the United States forces have flown about 65 percent of the air sorties, including combat and support operations. The U.S. is also providing at least 25 percent of refugee and migration assistance, shouldering the major burden of the Kosovo conflict.

Even when this conflict is right in their own backyard, as the situation in the Balkans takes its toll, many of our allies are continuing to enjoy higher standards of living than our constituents, the American people. These nations can support education, health care, child care, and vital social programs because we pay their military bills.

□ 1300

Our Europeans have gotten used to the American taxpayer picking up the tab for their defense. When they are allowed to do this, we cheat our children, we cheat our seniors, we cheat ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come for our allies to pay their fair share and come to the United States with that share so that we can invest in our children, our seniors, and our environment. Vote for Shays-Franks this afternoon.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR).

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Chairman, the Yugoslav surrender is the first mark of hope in a long time for more than a million Albanian Kosovars. The horror that they have endured has ignited outrage around the world.

In a recent trip that I took with some of my colleagues to Albania and Macedonia and to the border of Kosovo, I talked with refugees coming and streaming across the border and into the camps.

I talked with one 16-year-old boy who told me he watched in horror as the paramilitary police tore the eyes out of his father's head.

I talked to a woman who told me how they came into her home, took her jewelry, stole her money, took her documents, and then ordered her out of the House as they burned her house with her mother and father still in it.

I talked to a woman, who had five children, who told me they could not get food for 4 days. They were locked in their house, afraid to go out because of the troops. When they sent the grandfather, who volunteered to go out to get them food, he was executed in the street.

The horrors go on and on and on. From a moral perspective, Mr. Speaker, America and our NATO allies had no choice but to hit Milosevic, hit him hard, hit his forces in Kosovo hard in order for them to withdraw.

Now, this has not been easy, nor without controversy. Military action never is. I respect those in the House whose opinions differ from mine. Each of us must answer to our own conscience in these very difficult issues.

I want to thank those Members on this side of the aisle who, under tremendous pressure, stood firm in their support for this policy. I believe their resolve has been vindicated.

The Speaker was in a difficult decision in terms of his own conference pulled one way and the other way, and he stood up at various times through-

out this process and helped move it forward, I think, in a positive way. I only hope today that he will stand up again.

I regret to say, though, there are those who have tried to politicize the war. For more than 2 months, they have rallied against this war, they have called it, quote-unquote, the Clinton-Gore war. This was America's effort, not the Clinton-Gore war, America's effort to say never again. It was our effort to try to say to those who were trying to commit ethnic cleansing, no, you cannot do that. We will not sit idly by.

Now these forces are attacking the peace. Our troops are still engaged. Their lives are at risk. From the beginning of this conflict, the brave men and women of America's armed forces have performed magnificently. They have answered the call of duty with tremendous bravery and skill and determination. We owe it to them to support their critical work in the months ahead.

This House of Representatives has not handled, in some instances, this matter with dignity. We have sent contradictory signals throughout the past several months. We have been divided too long. But today we have a chance to set aside these divisions.

This is an historic moment for NATO and for the strength of our alliance. Let us come together today in this House. Let us support the peace process. Let us recognize that America has once again stood tall for the values that our great-grandparents, our grandparents, our fathers and mothers stood for when they fought in the First and Second World Wars in Europe.

The road ahead will be arduous. It is not going to be easy. Kosovo must be secured, and nearly half a million of their people must be settled in their homes. We owe it to those who fought bravely for us and to those who have been persecuted so much, we owe it to finish this thing in a responsible way.

It will not be finished by September. Cutting off their funding would only undermine their mission, even as they stand on the bridge of success. So let us support our troops and let us support a strong peace.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes on the Skelton amendment and no on the Fowler and the Souder amendments.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me just say a couple of things here. First, the devil is in the details. Mr. Milosevic has burned every village in Kosovo, or almost every village, and the simple fact is that he is now going to stop burning, now that there is nothing left, is not necessarily a victory.

I have two staff members who, as volunteers, have delivered some 20,000 packages of food and medicine to the refugee camps. They report to me that massive numbers of men are missing. By British estimate, I believe it is, 100,000 men from the Kosovar peasant population. We need to know what has